

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO†

EXCERPTS FROM OUR STATE MEDICAL JOURNAL

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From Some Editorial Notes:

New Year—New Opportunities.—With its three hundred and sixty-five clean, unmarked pages, a new year has come to us to use or abuse; to write things upon them that will endure and be of benefit to the people, to the profession of which we are humble units, to the communities in which we severally live and work and have our influence; or to be left blank, soiled, scrawled upon or smudged. There is enough to do, God knows, in the way of helping ourselves and of helping the people whose needs and ills and sufferings we tend; and we must not forget that in helping ourselves to a better living, to a fuller life, we are helping the people. A physician poor in purse is handicapped to the extent that he cannot provide himself with the proper things of knowledge or material equipment with which to give the best that is in him to his patients. This we should not fail to recognize or to make our patients understand, as we have opportunity from time to time. There is nothing in the world more dangerous than a cheap lawyer except a cheap doctor. Let the new year see you follow more accurate and careful business methods in dealing with the business side of your work; no one respects the man he can defraud or cheapen, and your patients will respect you more for it. Do not let your accounts run for a year or two and then try to collect what you can; send out your bills promptly, and after a year of moderate effort to collect see that the debtor is forced to pay, if he is in a position to do so. . . . Above all, do not forget to do your own best work for the benefit of your own county medical society; it will help you and will help every member of the profession and will stimulate a greater respect for the entire profession in your community. Nothing hurts us all so much as rows among medical men themselves. A fight between two physicians not only hurts them both, no matter which one is in the right, but it hurts the whole medical profession by belittling its members in the eyes of the community. In every county where you find a good, active, well-knit county medical society, there you will find the medical profession looked up to and respected. There is plenty to be written on these clean pages of this year's new book; will you write something worth while?

Union Health Departments.—All over the country cities are engaged in becoming acquainted with themselves by means of efficiency surveys. These surveys have grown out of the perfectly natural desire of the taxpayer to know how his money is being spent, and whether he is getting value received. Wherever these surveys have been instituted, the health department is primarily the one which shows marked weakness in comparison to the other departments of administration. The reason of this is evident. As long as city councils and county boards of supervisors have the impression that the chief functions of a health department are limited to the placarding and fumigation of habitations after certain diseases, and the investigation and removal of the causes of bad smells, so long will the appropriations for health work continue to be inadequate. . . .

Public Health and Interference.—It seems a curious fatality to announce in a special health number of the JOURNAL the fact that the Secretary of the State Board of Health has resigned his office because of the intolerable interference with his work by some petty-minded laymen who really have nothing to say about it but who have usurped the right to say how every dollar of the money spent by the Board of Health shall be expended. Were it not a matter of the greatest importance to the people of the state, it would be farcical in the extreme. Doctor Snow has for several years served the state as Secretary of the State Board of Health and has served it intelligently and faithfully.

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† This column strives to mirror the work and aims of colleagues who bore the brunt of Association activities some twenty-five years ago. It is hoped that such presentation will be of interest to both old and new members.

BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA†

By CHARLES B. PINKHAM, M.D.
Secretary-Treasurer

News Items

"Dr. Morton R. Gibbons, Sr., noted surgeon in his own right and fifth in a family of medical men, will be in charge of the hospital to be operated at Treasure Island next year. . . . The hospital probably will be manned by three or four doctors and an equal number of nurses. . . ." (San Francisco *Chronicle*, November 4, 1938.)

"Dr. Aaron J. Rosanoff, fifty-nine, operator of a private San Gabriel sanitarium and member of the Los Angeles County Lunacy Commission since 1923, today was appointed director of state institutions by Governor-elect Culbert L. Olson. He will take office January 2. He is a charter member and former president of the Southern California Academy of Criminology." (San Francisco *Call-Bulletin*, December 5, 1938.)

"Because the only testimony against him was that of accomplices, Dr. Edward H. Anthony, physician, yesterday was granted a new trial on charges of participating in a fake-accident insurance swindle. The District Court of Appeal reversed the conviction by a jury in Superior Judge Charles Fricke's court, with the declaration that: 'After eliminating the testimony of accomplices, the record is devoid of any evidence, even slight, to connect Doctor Anthony with the commission of the crimes charged. The only evidence, excluding that of accomplices, is that Doctor Anthony treated the alleged injured persons, thereafter participating in discussions for the settlement of their claims and receiving in payment of his bill for professional service a portion of the money paid on these claims. These fees were not excessive.' The case was one in which three persons confessed they faked injuries to collect insurance. Doctor Anthony testified he believed their injuries legitimate and had no part in any criminal activities. . . ." (Los Angeles *Examiner*, November 19, 1938.)

"R. T. Church, forty-eight, foot ailment specialist, yesterday pleaded guilty to practicing medicine without a license in Police Judge E. E. Breitenbucher's court and was fined \$100. Judge Breitenbucher also suspended a 180-day jail term, after Church admitted violations of the California Medical Act. He was arrested by Detective Sergeant Frank Ingalls and Detective Walter McLachlan." (Stockton *Independent*, November 11, 1938.)

"Denying his plea for probation, Superior Judge Lincoln S. Church today sentenced Dr. Boyajian B. Arman, fifty, to a term of one year in the county jail for unlawful possession of a narcotic." (Oakland *Post-Enquirer*, November 16, 1938.)

"Dr. John E. Baker, former Hollywood police surgeon, convicted as one of a fake accident ring conspiring to defraud insurance companies, will be paroled from San Quentin next April 2." (Los Angeles *Examiner*, November 18, 1938.) (Previous entries, July, September, 1937; April, 1928; September, December, 1937; January, April, 1938.)

"This court feels that this woman, who is not opposed to surgery, let her son die a horrible death because she refused to consent to an operation on the boy even after being warned his life depended on it.' The above statement was directed yesterday by Superior Judge A. A. Schott against Mrs. Lillian Volstad, whose son, Francis Warren Volstad, nine, died in General Hospital of a ruptured appendix. In commenting on the pitiful tragedy the jurist explained the mother refused to accompany her dying son to the hospital, adding—'And so we have the sorry spectacle

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† The office addresses of the California State Board of Medical Examiners are printed in the roster on advertising page 6.